

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 480 606

PS 030 703

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TITLE Care for Young Children in Four English-Speaking Countries.

INSTITUTION Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, Bloomington, IN.

ISBN ISBN-0-87367-838-9

PUB DATE 2002-00-00

NOTE 65p.

AVAILABLE FROM Phi Delta Kappa International, P.O. Box 789, Bloomington, IN 47402-0789 (\$17.95). Tel: 800-766-1156 (Toll Free); Tel: 812-339-1156; Fax: 812-339-5556; e-mail: orders@pdkintl.org; Web site: <http://www.pdkintl.org>.

PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS

DESCRIPTORS Caregiver Training; Comparative Analysis; Cross Cultural Studies; *Early Childhood Education; Educational Change; Educational Policy; Foreign Countries; Government Role; Influences; Preschool Curriculum; *Public Policy; Teacher Qualifications

IDENTIFIERS Canada; Historical Background; New Zealand; United Kingdom; United States

ABSTRACT

As the interdependence of nations becomes increasingly evident and necessary, so too must our understanding about education become shared property. This monograph examines the early childhood education and care systems in four English-speaking nations with strong elements of common heritage. Systems in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and New Zealand are examined separately, with each analysis focusing on elements including philosophy, recent changes and reforms, practitioner training, and curriculum and instruction. The monograph's concluding section summarizes the analyses, noting that all four countries: recognize the importance of early care and education, base their programs on some fundamental principles of child growth and development, assume that teachers should be knowledgeable in areas of child growth and development, and value the use of play as a way of learning for young children. Historical influences on early care and education are noted for each country, as are catalysts for recent changes and reforms, and differences across countries in terms of program emphasis and practitioner qualifications. (Sections for the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada contain references.) (HTH)

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES IN EDUCATION

ED 480 606

CARE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN IN FOUR ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

by
Jo Ann Belk, George Thomas,
Carol Ruciman,
Kathryn McNaughton, and
Sandra Iversen

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**Phi Delta Kappa
International Studies in Education**

*We can only see in a picture what our experience
permits us to see.*

Edgar Dale

The Phi Delta Kappa International Studies in Education Series was established as a way to enlarge the common experience of education by publishing studies that bring to readers knowledge of heretofore unfamiliar theories, philosophies, and practices in the profession of education.

As the interdependence of nations becomes increasingly evident and necessary with the passage of time, so too must our understandings about education become shared property. In this sharing, we come increasingly to comprehend one another across civilizations and cultures, for education is at the core of human endeavor. Through education we pass on to succeeding generations not merely the accumulated wisdom of our past but the vision and means to create the future.

Care for Young Children in Four English-Speaking Countries is the eighth monograph in this series.

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FOREWORD
by James K. Uphoff

PHI DELTA KAPPA
EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION
Bloomington, Indiana
U.S.A.

Cover design by
Peg Caudell

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Library of Congress Control Number 2002105072

ISBN 0-87367-838-9

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Bloomington, Indiana U.S.A.

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FOREWORD

One of my most significant professional growth experiences took place nearly three decades ago when I had the opportunity to be part of a comparative education travel seminar that visited schools in four very different socialist nations (Finland, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Spain). I learned that by being better informed of how other nations set and met their education goals, I could learn more about my own nation and its schools.

This monograph enables readers to engage in some of the same opportunities for personal and professional growth. Concentrating on four English-speaking nations with strong elements of common heritage enables readers to look for both similarities and differences. Especially when differences are detected, we then have the obligation to seek answers to the following questions:

- Is this difference simply a matter of differing ways of seeking the same goal, or does it represent a different goal or belief about children, learning, and the role of early childhood education?
- How does this practice or policy relate to the goals of this society?
- To what degree is this practice consistent with or at odds with what research has found to be true regarding the learning and development of young children?

The importance of early childhood education has been given an even stronger place within education by the latest research on the brain. When I attended the 1997 national conference for the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) in Baltimore, I saw exciting research on early education. The

conference program included dozens of sessions about new information stressing the importance of early childhood education to maximum brain development.

The exhibit hall displays also provided evidence that these relationships exist and are vital to child development from the very earliest years. The many new media materials on display and the session presenters combined to carry a significant message to all educators: "Early childhood education is vital to the long-term health of any society. We ignore infant and child development and education at our own peril as a nation."

This monograph provides a practical way to enhance the reader's own level of understanding of early childhood education. As we look for the similarities and differences among four primarily English-speaking nations — the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and New Zealand — we will be able to understand the entire early childhood education movement in a more thorough way.

James K. Uphoff
Wright State University
Dayton, Ohio, U.S.A.

UNITED STATES:
GOALS 2000 AND BEYOND

America's most recent efforts in early childcare education reform came with Goals 2000. The Goals 2000: Educate America Act, signed into law in 1994, helped focus America's attention on the importance of early childhood education. The first goal, stating that all children will start school ready to learn, with additional emphasis on parents, health and prenatal care, and appropriate preschool environments for all children, reflects the feelings of educators and the public in general concerning the importance of early care for children. In the United States, "Issues long neglected — equity, universality, comprehensiveness — have made their way joyously into one of the nation's premier statements on the direction of education" (Kagan 1994, p. 186). Other factors directing attention to early care include businesses, the media, global interdependence, and early care practitioners. Attention to early care has become increasingly crucial in recent years.

Philosophy

Early childhood education of young children in the United States is based on some fundamental assumptions about young children and the teaching/learning process. First, successful early childhood educators* must have an adequate knowledge of child growth

*Throughout this essay, the term *early childhood educator* will be used to describe adults who work with young children in a variety of settings: full- and part-day care for infants, preschoolers, and school-age children; those who work in preschools designed for children aged 2½ to five years; and those who work in school settings with kindergarten and early-primary age children.

and development. They must be able to recognize the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive stages of development of the child. Second, developmentally appropriate learning activities must be provided for the child. This includes both age-appropriate and individually appropriate activities to help children acquire concepts. Third, educators recognize that play is a way of learning for young children. Finally, teachers must meet the needs of all children by providing a variety of learning activities for different interest levels, ability levels, and learning modes. In order to accomplish this, teachers must know the children. The teacher is the key to successful early childhood education.

A Short History

The origins of early childhood education in the United States are strongly tied to programs centered on child care for children of working parents. These programs not only answered the needs of 19th century immigrant families but also kept children away from such harmful environments as factories.

In the early 20th century, the government provided child care as a temporary service afforded to children in need or during a national political or economic crisis. The mainstream view was one of stay-at-home mothers caring for their children. During the Depression of the 1930s, however, important steps were taken toward improving child care. And as more women entered the workforce during World War II, opportunities arose for government involvement in child care. For example, the government passed the Lanham Act of 1941, which provided federal funds for childcare centers. Employers also responded to childcare needs during World War II in the form of employer-sponsored childcare centers serving children between the ages of 18 months and six years (Seefeld and Barbour 1994).

After the war the government's emergency childcare facilities were phased out, and private centers increasingly became the most workable solution to the nation's childcare needs. But some workforce changes were permanent. Many women did not return

to being stay-at-home moms; instead, they became working mothers, which underlined the need for improved childcare during peacetime.

American educators concerned with the childcare movement in the United States began programs promoting improved child care. Among those notable early educators were Margaretha Schurz, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, Susan Blow, John Dewey, and Patty Smith Hill. Their work helped to lay a foundation that is evident in early childhood programs today.

Margaretha Schurz was very impressed with Friedrich Wilhelm Froebel's kindergarten in Germany. After studying with Froebel for some time, she decided to open a kindergarten in Watertown, Wisconsin. She opened a German-speaking kindergarten based on Froebel's philosophy that play was an important component of learning. She also believed in using structured learning experiences for the children. This was the first German-speaking kindergarten in the United States.

Elizabeth Palmer Peabody (1804-1894) was the founder in 1860 of the first English-speaking kindergarten in the United States. She was a prolific author and speaker who spread the word for early childhood education. Peabody also was influenced by Friedrich Froebel, and her Boston kindergarten used his philosophy of structure and play. She also was active in developing programs for all children, including blacks and Native Americans. Peabody was related by marriage to Nathaniel Hawthorne and Horace Mann, who married her sisters.

Susan Blow (1843-1916) saw a need for a public school kindergarten for those who could not afford a private school. She helped to organize and begin a kindergarten in St. Louis, Missouri, which was so successful that it led to the establishment of several other kindergartens in the area.

John Dewey (1859-1952) promoted the concept of an active curriculum for children that was integrated and reflected the children's interests. He based his theories of childhood learning on active involvement of the children. His progressive ideas are the basis for most early childhood education programs in the United States today.

Patty Smith Hill (1868-1946), a student of John Dewey, was a major proponent of using observation to study young children. She believed that the curriculum for early childhood education should be developed based on the recorded observations of childhood with an emphasis on the child's needs. She also emphasized that the school must maintain a relationship with the child's home and community. Patty Smith Hill founded the National Association for Nursery Education, which today is the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Meeting Diverse Needs

During the 1960s, researchers pointed to the importance of early life experiences on later intellectual development. President Lyndon Johnson's Head Start program was implemented to meet the needs of educating young minds in preschool.

President Johnson's concern with impoverished families led to the formation of the Office of Economic Development. Under the auspices of this office, Head Start began in the summer of 1965. Head Start represented the new understanding of the importance of child development in early life. In 1969 a companion program, Follow Through, was introduced to provide continuity for children in Head Start as they entered elementary school.

Since the 1960s children with disabilities also have been included in the progression of early childhood education. In 1968 Public Law 90-538, the Handicapped Children's Early Education Assistance Act, authorized preschool and early education programs for handicapped children. In 1972 Head Start was mandated to reserve 10% of its enrollment for children with disabilities. In 1975 P.L. 94-142, the Education for all Handicapped Children Act, was passed and required that all children with disabilities be provided with free, appropriate public education. Amendments to P.L. 94-142 have included children from birth to eight years old. Financial and technical assistance is offered through P.L. 98-199 and P.L. 99-457, which passed in 1986. These laws emphasize parents' and families' roles in making early intervention efforts

work. The Individuals with Disability Education Act (P.L. 101-476) further implemented early childhood special education in the United States by guaranteeing the right to free, appropriate, and individualized education for the disabled (Feeney, Christensen, and Moravcik 1996).

Recent Changes and Reforms

In the 1980s several agencies in the United States worked together to bring about further reform in early care programs. For example, early childhood educators worked together under the auspices of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) to identify core values for early childhood education. The NAEYC established a *Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment* to guide its members in responsible professional practice. It also developed guidelines for the preparation of early childhood teachers. These guidelines were endorsed by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Division of Early Childhood (DEC).

The NAEYC also made a significant contribution to the improvement of early care by establishing criteria for high-quality early childhood programs. These criteria formed the basis for nationwide, voluntary accreditation of early care programs. This was the first accreditation of early care programs (Hymes 1991). In order to be accredited, early care programs must meet the NAEYC standards. The NAEYC advocates licensing and accreditation of all early care programs.

Other contributions to improving early care came from the report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk*, and from reports by the National Science Foundation and Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Each helped initiate better-quality early care programs.

Types of Programs

Various programs have been implemented to meet the diverse needs of children and parents in communities across the United

States. Willer and his colleagues (1991) described several types of early care programs available for young children, including center care, family day care, in-home care, and relative care. These types of child care can be briefly defined as follows:

Center care refers to any organized group setting in which children are provided with care. Examples include childcare programs operated by nonprofit centers and for-profit centers, sponsored programs (including Head Start), childcare programs in public schools, and programs sponsored by religious organizations, employers, and community agencies.

Family day care is provided for small groups of children in a caregiver's home. Usually the caregiver is the parent of one or more of the children, and other children are included. Family day care may be regulated or nonregulated. Nonregulated care refers to caregivers who are not licensed or registered with state or local authorities.

In-home care is distinguished from family day care in that the caregiver is an unrelated person who comes to the home to care for a family's children. This caregiver may bring his or her own children along, and so the situation sometimes resembles family day care.

Relative care is childcare provided by a nonparent, related individual, such as a grandparent.

Although programs vary throughout the United States, all have similar goals of helping children acquire basic skills for reading, writing, and mathematics; developing social skills; and learning critical thinking. Developing positive attitudes toward learning is also stressed. Ramey and Ramey (1994) suggest the following characteristics for successful early care programs: 1) active parent and community involvement and collaboration, 2) a developmentally appropriate classroom environment, and 3) community support. They believe that children in childcare environments should develop positive attitudes toward school, academic skills, and an appreciation of cultural diversity.

Curriculum and Instruction

Becoming a competent early childhood teacher begins with learning about the growth and development of young children. Developmentally appropriate learning activities must be provided for the children. Early childhood education must provide a vehicle for provision of children's needs. These needs encompass both physical and psychological needs. When children feel secure, they are able to focus on giving and receiving love, the pursuit of understanding the world, and self-actualization.

Play is a very important component of the early childhood curriculum because it is an integral way of learning for young children. It is important in the child's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. Play is a vehicle that provides the necessary experiences for young children to be successful in school (Brewer 1995).

Parental involvement is another important component of early childhood programs. Parents exert a tremendous influence in the process of educating the child. When parents and teachers work together cooperatively for the benefit of the child, children are able to achieve more, children have positive attitudes toward school, and the parents gain skills in working with their children at home. Parents benefit most, of course, when they are involved in all aspects of the programs.

The goals of any early education program should reflect the society's values as well as long-term goals for children's development. Biber stated that programs for young children are a powerful force in influencing "not only the excellence of intellect but in shaping the feelings, the attitudes, the values, the sense of self and the dreaming of what is to be the images of good and evil in the world about and the visions of what the life . . . might be" (1969, p. 8).

In choosing content, early childhood educators must know what is relevant for young children. Educators should first and foremost know their students. Included in the curriculum should be learning experiences about family and community and sub-

jects of interest and meaning to the young learners. The ways of organizing a curriculum for young children are numerous. The most common ways are: 1) a facts and skills approach, 2) a subject-centered approach, 3) a learner-centered approach, and 4) an integrated or thematic approach.

In the facts and skills approach, learning experiences are arranged so that children learn a given set of factual information and certain skills. They can learn such factual information as the days of the week, the letters of the alphabet, or the names of colors. The skills experiences are selected and arranged so that children learn motor skills, social skills, and academic skills.

The subject-centered approach is one of the most common ways of organizing the curriculum in the elementary school. In this approach, attainment of academic knowledge is emphasized in the different subject areas, such as reading, mathematics, science, language arts, and social studies. This organization is a useful framework for ensuring that all areas of the content are included. This type of organization is more appropriate for older children. It is not developmentally appropriate for younger children.

Thematic organization is a primary way of organizing the curriculum for young children. Choosing a theme or topic for instruction provides an organizing framework. Thematic organization is used extensively because it offers an excellent means of integrating the different subject areas. Teachers choose a particular theme that may be carried out using learning centers as a means of instruction. For example, bears may be used as a theme throughout the classroom in learning centers. One area may use bears to teach math skills, such as sorting or counting. The house-keeping area may use bears as a dramatization to develop social skills. Another area may use reading and art related to the bears theme. Teaching the different areas where particular bears live may cover social studies.

The instruction must be meaningful and relevant to the children. The curriculum must be balanced to ensure growth in all areas of development.

Training Practitioners

According to Phillips (1994), there are a variety of approaches to training, education, and certification in the early childhood field. These include degree programs, such as associate of arts, bachelor of science, and graduate degrees with emphasis in early childhood granted by colleges and universities.

The associate of arts program is a two-year program offered in community colleges. It includes classroom instruction and supervised laboratory or collaborative center experience. Students must develop competencies in providing services, teaching, and guiding preschool children. The topics studied include child growth and development, learning experiences for children, behavior guidance, cultural diversity, health and safety, and program planning and management. Students also study the relationships between parents and child centers, child abuse and neglect, and regulations and policies for childcare services. This program prepares students to work in preschools, family daycare centers, and as professional nannies.

The bachelor of science program is a four- to five-year program offered at colleges and universities. The programs include the study of theory and practical experiences in daycare programs and schools. In addition to meeting the entrance requirements to the college, prospective students must complete 15 semester hours of general education courses before being accepted into the program. After being accepted into the program, students study theory, child growth and development, curriculum, programs, methods of teaching and assessment, and parental and community involvement. Students also complete field experiences under the supervision of a college instructor and classroom teacher. These field experiences, in which the student works with young children in the public schools, allows the student to apply the theory learned in the college classroom. After completing the requirements and obtaining a degree, students must receive certification from the state department of education. In some states a police check is done for arrest records. After receiving certification and becoming employed in public school early care programs, the

new teachers must participate in regular inservice programs and are continually evaluated by administrators.

The child development associate certificate (CDA) is a two-year training program. The CDA National Credentialing Program is a program of the federal government and the childcare profession to fill the need for high-quality early care programs. According to Brown and Henry, "A CDA is defined as a person able to meet specific needs of children and who, with parents and other adults, work to nurture children's physical, social, emotional and intellectual growth in a child development framework" (1995, p. 2). The CDA Credentialing Program includes six competency goals that must be demonstrated by candidates. The goals are establishing an appropriate environment, promoting physical and intellectual skills, social and emotional development, relationships with others, meeting the needs of children, and a professional commitment (Brown and Henry 1995).

Licensing and Certification

Because it is imperative that early childhood programs are established to protect and to be committed to the children's welfare, these programs are subject to regulations through registration or licensing and the certification of people who work in the program. The National Association for the Education of Young Children established accreditation standards and procedures in the 1980s. It also established the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a separate credentialing body. The majority of the 50 states require specialized training in early childhood development and related areas and credentialing and licensing of programs (Feeney, Christensen, and Moravcik 1996).

Assessment

Assessment is a continuous process. A primary means of assessment is observation of the children. By observing the children's responses to questions, questions they ask, participation in cooperative groups, and their problem-solving strategies, teach-

ers can acquire an excellent concept of the children's strengths and weaknesses. From their observations they can determine the types of instruction, remediation, or enrichment activities that need to be included in the education program. This also helps the teacher assess their methods of teaching and the program being used. The observation process includes gathering and interpreting information, making systematic observations, and writing descriptions. Devices that may aid in observation include checklists, rating scales, and anecdotal records. Audio and videotape also may be used to aid observation.

Another assessment technique is the use of portfolios. Portfolios are an excellent means of providing developmentally appropriate assessment of the children. They allow the teacher to decide what is to be included in the assessment. Portfolios should contain samples of the children's work, reflections, summaries from the teacher regarding progress, and comments. Information from parents also may be included. A disadvantage of portfolios is that they are time consuming for the teachers. However, they do provide a much clearer picture of the children's progress than do test scores.

Criterion-referenced tests provide the teacher with information concerning skills. Screening tests have clearly defined purposes and are used as information-gathering tools. Screening tests help identify children who may be in need of special services. These tests focus on the children's ability to acquire skills and so may be called developmental screening tests.

Assessment is a vital component of the education program. Early childhood educators use various methods to assess children's growth and development. Observation, portfolios, and tests all involve a four-part process of data collection, interpretation, judgment, and reporting. The information from the assessment must be used to help each child reach his or her full potential.

Summary

Early childhood education is crucial in meeting the future standards of education in the United States. The federal Goals 2000

Act of 1994 demonstrates this fact by stressing the point that all children should enter school ready to learn.

The following trends point toward a hopeful future for early care in America:

- Emphasis on accreditation of programs, training, and credentialing of teachers.
- Use of developmentally appropriate practices.
- Multicultural awareness is rising
- Knowledge of developmental differences is expanding
- Groups and organizations are increasing advocacy for children and their families
- Collaboration among businesses with an increasing awareness of the importance of early care (Black and Puckett 1996).

It has been said that there are two gifts we can give to children: One is roots, the other is wings. American early childhood educators attempt to give both by balancing structure and freedom in childcare settings of all types.

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EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

We live in a world where communications are improving and making the world seem smaller. Travel and exchanges of information between nations is quick and easy. Educators realize the mutual benefits of tapping into the expectations and experiences of educators from other countries.

The people and national government of the United Kingdom know that children are a resource, and the way it uses that resource says much about that country and its vision of the future. In the United Kingdom, we know that investment in the education of the young child brings benefits at the time and in the years to come. That investment benefits the child, the child's family and the society in which the child lives.

Philosophy

Early childhood education in the United Kingdom is considered an extremely important part of the education system. Susan Isaacs — arguably the founder of child development studies in England — wrote in *Childhood and After* (1948) that by comparing matched groups of children, those who had been in nurseries learned more easily, played more actively, and thrived better than similar children who did not have this advantage.

The role of the childcare providers and teachers should never be underestimated. The gentle but firm supervision of a trained and qualified adult, wholly focused on the child, along with the child's family, can make the difference between successful and happy early years education and experiences that are not so successful or happy. This philosophy is evident in the early childhood education programs in the United Kingdom.

In 1969 Van Der Eyken recognized that one of the biggest problems in the expansion of early years education was the supply of suitably trained teachers. This is a problem to which many different solutions have been found. It often depends on the demands of the potential candidates, who may be working, volunteering, or wanting to undertake full-time or part-time study at a college or elsewhere. The teachers and caregivers are very important people in the early childhood programs and must be selected carefully.

Other philosophical concerns include the importance of working with the whole child. The child's physical health and academic achievement are integral components of the early childhood programs. This reflects the influence of the MacMillan sisters and their emphasis on nurture in the nursery schools in the early 1900s. Parental involvement also is considered extremely important. Piaget's theories concerning cognitive development were instrumental in the development of the early childhood education programs.

A Short History

Early years child care and education in Britain became of particular significance during World War I, when the women of the country were needed to keep the country going. All the able-bodied men during this time were being sent to the front. Before this time, very little was provided for the very young child except for the privileged few, who might have a nanny or a governess at home. The nanny might possibly follow the radical ideas of Rousseau or Froebel, but it was more likely that they favored the traditional strict and authoritarian style of the time.

The first great education act, the Forster Act of 1970, did not recognize the needs of the very young child. However, it soon became apparent that they had to be cared for. Young children were allowed to sit at the back of the classroom while the older children were having lessons, providing the young children were quiet.

It was not long before the significance of the child's health, as well as its education, was acknowledged. The great childcare pioneers, Rachel and Margaret MacMillan, worked with the poorest children in the early part of this century. They were particularly concerned about the health of the children they were trying to educate.

Rachel MacMillan ran an open-air school where children slept under verandas outside in Deptford in the East End of London. Her sister, Margaret, said in her book, *The Nursery School*, that "the results of open air schools . . . are found in the rapid progress of alert and awakened children" (1927, p. 148). Their health improved and so did their ability to learn. Margaret introduced into the school system, first in the north of England and later nationally, such innovations as medical checks and meals. They knew that a child could not learn if it was ill or hungry.

The four main areas of a child's development — the physical, emotional, intellectual or cognitive, and social — are important to early childhood educators in the United Kingdom. Aesthetic and moral development, following the work of Piaget, were important to the early educators and have become more so as society perceives these aspects of a child's upbringing to be in decline. The investigation of the role of play and the theories of play have been and still are fascinating areas for those studying and providing early childhood education. This is particularly important in relation to the curriculum offered to the very young child.

Recent Changes and Reforms

In Britain today, "parent power" is a concept with which all those in education are familiar. In recent years parents have replaced teachers as the movers and shapers of the education system. The government gradually has given parents more power and influence over schools. Some of this power has been welcomed and used well, while some of it has been misused and is not welcomed by practitioners.

Whatever their private opinions, workers in the early years field have had to learn to work with the child and his or her family, whatever type of family that is. Childcare workers consider aspects of the sociology of the family in all its rich variety. Emphasis is placed on cooperating with parents, working with them in the education of their child, and keeping them fully informed about the child and its progress.

Early years workers pay special attention to the family when the child has special needs. Instances of special needs may be such physical problems as a child's use of a wheelchair, blindness, or deafness or cultural differences, for example, where the parents and child speak another language or come from a different cultural or religious background.

There is a rich cultural diversity in many areas of Great Britain, and so this topic is considered particularly important. Early childhood educators use this richness to enhance the knowledge and experience of parents and children alike. In recent years special attention has been given to equality and helping parents to understand it, too.

Curriculum and Instruction

Those working in early education in the United Kingdom must work within a national framework. For those in the school system, the National Curriculum provides a framework for students five years old and older. The National Curriculum, introduced in 1988, is organized into Key Stages. Key Stage 1, for children age five to seven years, covers such subjects as English, math, science, history, geography, technology, and so on. These subjects all are included on the Standard Assessment test (SAT) at the end of the stage.

The Foundation Stage Curriculum, introduced in September 2000, is designed to prepare preschool children for the National Curriculum. It covers the stages of learning through which children pass so that practitioners can assess needs and plan accordingly. There is an emphasis on play, reflecting points made in the

Plowden Report, which was produced 30 years earlier. Both play and the need for firsthand experiences are a significant part of the work done in the Foundation Stage. The Foundation Stage covers six areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication, Language and Literacy
- Mathematical Development
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- Physical Development
- Creative Development

All early years workers learn to plan activities for the children in their care around these six areas, and curriculum planning now is a significant part of the training for these workers.

The nursery curriculum offers a wide variety of activities. All the usual types of play are provided: sand, water, clay, dough, paint, creative activities, construction, blocks, bricks, jigsaws, science, and discovery. Many nurseries have a weekly theme around which activities are based, such as conversation, animals, shopping, or color and shape recognition. In addition, dressing-up play, a home area, and small toys cater to the child's imagination. Large equipment and wheeled toys in an outside area provide gross motor development.

For the child who is near compulsory school age, the new United Kingdom national curriculum will be of considerable importance. This covers such areas as literacy, mathematics, science, creativity, technology, and the humanities, as well as religion and esthetics. The child will be tested against a national standard at the age of seven, and the results will be published. The success or failure of recruitment to a school may depend on these results.

Plans are under way to test children at age five, the age of school entry, to ascertain the child's level of attainment and thus give a clearer picture of the "value added" by the school itself. This may eliminate some of the false results given by studies of a cohort of children who are already very different when they

arrive in school at the age of five because their backgrounds and experiences have already had an effect.

Training Practitioners

In the United Kingdom there are several routes to follow for the adult wishing to work in the field of early childhood education. For the parent working in the well-established network of community preschool playgroups, called the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA), formerly the Pre-School Playgroups Association (PPA), colleges in the locality offer a Diploma in Playgroup Practice. This usually requires two years of part-time study that covers practical and theoretical aspects of child care. It also includes the business side of running a community group. Making up rotas, or rosters, of volunteer helpers; keeping accounts; and purchasing equipment are emphasized in the program.

Candidates often are self-selected and come from a range of backgrounds and have a wide range of previous educational attainment. The tutors, who are carefully trained by PLA, have particular skills in encouraging all those who are suitable to complete the course. The course includes assessed written work and assignments, though there is no final examination or assessment.

There also is a system of training childcare workers in the workplace. This relies on assessment of competencies as specified by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ). The assessment is done by trained work-based assessors. It is part of the growing network of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ), heavily promoted by the British government to upgrade the skills of those already in the workforce, but who are unqualified. The system is similar to the national credentialing program in the United States that awards a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential to workers who meet competency goals.

These assessments are devised by the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition. The cohort can be mostly self-selected, though a minimum standard of education is advised. The candidate must work in a childcare setting as an employee or

a volunteer. The system relies heavily on the collection of documentation or evidence and the testimony of an adviser/assessor. A verifier who has not been involved in the process checks the documentation.

This type of qualification can prove more time consuming and can include more paperwork than the candidate at first imagines. It can bring a recognized qualification within the grasp of those who previously thought this was almost impossible. The United Kingdom system does not require the completion of a written examination of knowledge of good practices. Most British candidates attend a college course to acquire the knowledge that needs to be demonstrated in the workplace.

Those who wish to undertake full-time study for a professional career in the field of early childhood usually have to undergo a rigorous selection process. Thorough training and systematic assessment are required in both theory and practice. Candidates ultimately achieve national recognition and registration. The successful candidates are able to work in a great variety of preschool settings.

In the United Kingdom, students often begin by studying in education colleges, where they follow a two-year course to gain a diploma (associate degree). Some may continue their studies at a recognized university to gain a full degree with Qualified Teacher Status. In the United Kingdom, students have to undertake four more years of study at a university, though they already may have successfully gained their diploma.

Selection of students in the United Kingdom is undertaken very carefully. First the applicant's education level must be correct. They must either have or be expected to have a sufficiently high education level to be able to cope with the demands of the course. This must include a high level of facility with the English language. All courses rely heavily on the student reading, researching, understanding, and interpreting theoretical knowledge.

There are other specific requirements that must be met. For example, the applicant must be interviewed by two people, one of whom must be an experienced childcare practitioner. Their health

must be checked; and the police are contacted to see if they have a criminal record, particularly any recorded offenses against children. This has become particularly important in the United Kingdom because of the spate of allegations of child abuse in recent years. In addition, most selectors expect the applicant to have some experience of caring for children in groups, rather than for individual children. This experience is a condition of their acceptance.

Despite these rigorous standards, successful applicants are varied in age, sex, and prior experiences. They range from the school dropout to the grandparent and cover every age range in between. Their common characteristics are that they tend to be cheerful, sociable, practical, sensible individuals who work well in a team. They also can be relied on to work alone when required. They also, of course, are committed to the welfare of children and their families.

It is made very clear to candidates that training to work with children in the early years is no "soft option," despite some public perceptions to the contrary. It requires hard work, both during their course of study and in the working life that will follow. Despite this warning, there continues to be many applications; and there can be as many as three not selected for every one that is.

Training programs include many of aspects of child development from the ages of birth to eight years. The four main areas of development studied are: physical, emotional, social, and intellectual/cognitive. Moral and aesthetic development also may be included. Physical development is studied in particular detail when considering the baby and the very young child.

Special care is taken at every stage to link one area of development to another. This is considered a particularly important aspect of the college student's training. They are encouraged to see the child holistically — as a whole child — rather than as a child who develops in separate sections. For example, when studying the sick child who has had an asthma attack, the college student will learn how to help the child regain his or her health and how to keep the child quiet and playing happily while recov-

ering. They also learn how to keep the room and the activities suitable for such a child and how to encourage the child's sociability without getting him or her overly excited.

The role of play and the theories of play also are studied, particularly in relation to the philosophy of the curriculum offered to the very young child. For the child attending school, the delivery of the new United Kingdom national curriculum will be studied.

There is a rich cultural diversity in many areas of Great Britain. College students are taught to use this richness, enhancing the knowledge and experience of parents and children alike. They learn to create an atmosphere that invites open, honest communication between parents and caregivers.

It is clear that the involvement of parents in the process makes the effects of early years education particularly important. The importance of parents as educators was recognized as long ago as 1967 in the United Kingdom when the Plowden Report, *Children and Their Primary Schools*, stated that the evidence showed the most significant factor in a child's success at school was the interest and involvement of the child's parents.

The tradition of keeping parents out of the school and leaving the educators to "get on with it" slowly gave way to making parents positively welcome and seeing them as partners. William Van Der Eyken (1969) concludes that the increased number of playgroups that have been started throughout the country aptly demonstrates the enthusiasm of mothers who are ready to volunteer in any program that furthers the development of their children.

Workers in the early years field learn to work with diverse children and families. They are taught how to include the child's family in the early years program, with special attention to families with particular needs. The childcare center is an important extension of the family home. Sharing experiences produces lively conversations among parents, caregivers and children.

Courses also give special attention to equality of opportunity, governed by laws and codes of practice. College students are taught how to positively encourage such equality and to help parents to understand it.

Linking Theory to Practice

Throughout their training, college students are expected to be able to link theory to practice. At regular intervals throughout the course, they undertake periods of practical training both in mainstream settings and, very often, with children with special needs.

They are expected to complete a considerable number of observations of children. These observations are carefully recorded and evaluated with reference to the work of theorists in that particular field. These observations form part of the student's assessment and are expected to show a progression of knowledge of children and skill in evaluation as their course progresses.

They also plan carefully and carry out practical tasks in their placements, such as display work, music, stories, and art and craft activities, on which they also are assessed. They are asked to analyze how the children in their care benefit from what they are doing, considering all aspects of development.

Assessment, Accreditation, and Destinations

To be successful in early years education it is essential to have a range of skills that are both theoretical and practical. The college student has to complete every aspect of the course, meeting specified standards. The student must receive satisfactory reports from the practical placements. The student must complete the required amount of coursework and child observations. The student must meet national standards in any assignments, essays, tests, and examinations required to gain qualification. Different courses have different requirements, which usually are set by the body that awards the qualification and under whose supervision the course has been run.

When the course has been completed and the graduates accredited, they will then seek employment in whichever area of early years education is particularly interesting to them. Having had a variety of experiences of practical settings during their training, they have the information needed to choose where they start their careers.

Many will go on to further training, some immediately and some in years to come. Those who enter areas of special needs often will be offered inservice training to equip them for a specific job that needs doing. Others will follow different paths as interests grow and develop.

A variety of courses is offered. Some require attendance at a college or university and some can be taken from an individual's own home, such as those offered by the Open University. All tutors encourage those in training to consider what they are studying as the beginning of a process, not as an end in itself. They aim to open minds to the concept of lifelong learning and to give an idea of what further training is available and might follow.

Investing in the Future

Early childhood education is a critical part of a nation's future, and those who educate the educators have a challenging responsibility. Courses have changed and developed to meet changing needs. The training of professionals in this field should constantly be reviewed and revised.

Research tells us more and more about the young child, the family, and the effects of early years experiences. There is a massive force for good available if training is done properly, thoroughly, and to a high standard. Every nation should take the opportunity to invest in this way in its greatest resource, its children.

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EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION
IN CANADA

Early childhood care and education has a long history in Canada. The unique regions of the country have responded to the needs of young children and their families differently, depending on geographic, cultural, and economic factors. Practitioners in the field have developed a distinct philosophical base as a foundation for further development. The articulation of a set of guiding principles at the national level is a recent, but critical initiative.

Philosophy

In Canada, professional organizations across the country have played a major role in ensuring that legislation has recognized the importance of the early years. At the national level, the Canadian Association for Young Children (CAYC) and the Canadian Child Care Federation have worked hard to ensure that the needs of young children are met in the years before school, as well as in school-based settings.

In 1994 the Canadian Child Care Federation published its "guiding principles" for quality child care in Canada. The following ideals were constructed by participants from across the country who attended a national forum on child care:

- Children have first call on society's resources.
- Canadians have a collective responsibility for the care and development of all children.
- Every child has a right to high-quality child care.
- High-quality child care is good for everyone: children, families, and communities. It is a social and economic investment for Canada.

- Parents have primary responsibility for their children. The childcare system has a responsibility to support parents.
- Early childhood education is a valuable contribution to society.
- The childcare system has a responsibility to promote equality and diversity.
- A high-quality childcare system reflects the needs, interests, and cultures of communities.
- All levels of government have responsibility to ensure delivery of high-quality childcare services within a comprehensive and supportive family policy framework.

This platform stresses several values that have come to have prominence in the early childhood care and education community: broad representation and responsibility, equity and diversity, and a concern for quality. Two principles identified at the national forum that speak directly to these values include 1) equitable access to a comprehensive range of high-quality childcare services that meet the needs of children, families, and communities, and 2) equitable access to a range of high-quality childcare services and cost-sharing mechanisms that are sensitive to the provincial, territorial, aboriginal, and local governments' abilities to contribute. The national forum also gave participants opportunities to think of the "big picture" of child care in the country. In order to ensure that care for young children is more than merely custodial, forum delegates articulated the following characteristics of quality care:

- Environments for children support optimal emotional, social, spiritual, intellectual, and physical development.
- The best current knowledge of early childhood theory and practice is reflected.
- Inclusivity and diversity are honored.
- Parent involvement is encouraged and respected.
- Education and specialized training in child development are essential.

Many of these characteristics form the core of professional training available to aspiring early childhood educators.

A Short History

Early childhood care and education in Canada can trace its roots to a childcare institution called the Public Nursery in Toronto in 1875. It was the forerunner for later innovations in publicly available care for very young children; and by the end of the 19th century, daycare centers were founded in Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, and Hamilton. Because of their small numbers and relative distance from each other, Canadian centers tended to align themselves with organizations in the United States, such as the National Federation of Day Nurseries, or with the National Society for Day Nurseries in England. Although Canadian professionals developed national organizations of their own in the years that followed, those early ties have continued to have an effect on practice (Prochner 1994, p.10).

As urban populations grew and the number of mothers in the labor force expanded, daycare centers became more numerous. While growth was slow but steady through the early part of the 20th century, the Depression halted development of childcare services as employment opportunities for women evaporated.

Canada's entry into the Second World War in 1939 necessitated the active involvement of a large number of women in the defense industry, as well as in other areas of the economy. In order to meet the need for child care, government- and industry-funded daycare centers were established. William Blatz, an influential teacher at the Institute of Child Study in Toronto, began training programs for individuals to work with young children. Three of his students were especially influential in furthering the cause of teacher training: Mary Wright at the University of Western Ontario, Margaret Fletcher at the Institute of Child Study, and Elsie Stapleford, who was instrumental in crafting Ontario's earliest legislation.

Postwar growth of center-based care for children of working parents did not develop as rapidly as did parent-participating

preschools. This reflected the emphasis placed on "stay-a-home" mothers, who wanted opportunities for their children to socialize with others but did not require full-day, full-time child care. In Ontario and Quebec, the parent-participating preschool movement was very strong and provided parents with an avenue to develop leadership, knowledge of child development, and practice in advocacy. Parents recognized the value of trained teachers for their children and raised public awareness of the importance of having a responsive and knowledgeable adult providing appropriate activities for the children in the preschool.

The 1960s and 1970s saw a rapid growth in the economy and a concomitant increase in the number of women participating in the workforce. Increasingly, many of these women had young children who required full-time or part-time care. In addition, increasing numbers of women were returning to school, adding to the numbers of parents who required out-of-home care for their children.

Early childhood education and care is a provincial or territorial responsibility in Canada, and various jurisdictions responded to the need for legislation and training at different times, depending on the social and economic determinants in place. Table 1 illustrates the disparity between the provinces and territories in when childcare legislation was passed.

It is apparent from the table that accessibility to training is a crucial factor in ensuring that specific preparation requirements are included in legislation. This is because specialized training in early childhood education and care has produced a cadre of professionally prepared individuals who then lobby for a training component in provincial or territorial legislation.

Recent Changes and Reforms

A major issue for Canadians in the field of early childhood education and care is the diverse population: inner-city families, families newly arrived in the country, First Nations children, and rural families who require different patterns of child care than do their urban cousins. Increasingly, specific training in multicultur-

Table 1. Training Requirements Through Legislation

Province/Territory	Date of 1st Legislation	Date Teacher Training Required	When Teacher Training Became Available
British Columbia	1937	1955	1955
Alberta	1978	1995	1970
Saskatchewan	1969	1989	1981
Manitoba	1982	1982	late 1960s
Ontario	1946	1960	1960
Quebec	1979	1989	1960s
New Brunswick	1974	--	early 1980s
Nova Scotia	1967	1989	early 1970s
Prince Edward Isl.	1973	1986	late 1970s
Newfoundland	1975	1989	1986
Yukon	1975	--	1989
Northwest Territories	1988	--	1988

--: Indicates no requirement for training in the legislation.

Note: The training requirement outlined in the legislation varies across jurisdiction. (Adapted from R. Young, *Introduction to Early Childhood Education*).

al, racism-free, bias-free, early childhood education (Chud 1992, p.6) is becoming part of both preservice and inservice training.

Another critical concern is accessibility to appropriate training because of distance and time factors. Workshops, institutes, publications, distance education initiatives, and Internet sites, such as that established by the Canadian Child Care Federation and more than 30 partners, are providing ways for people to work together to increase their understanding of the field.

Recently, the federal government has made funding available for a program titled "Aboriginal Head Start," designed for First Nations preschoolers and their families. In communities involved in establishing Aboriginal Head Start centers, individuals interested in working with young children will focus on designing a childcare and early education environment that gives priority to the children's language and cultural heritage, as well as extensive involvement by parents and elders.

Innovative training delivery, partnerships with government and communities, and the recognition of the need for culturally re-

sponsive child care are necessary if Canadian child care and early education are to continue to provide the best possible environments for young children.

Curriculum and Instruction

Research in the area of curriculum and instruction of young children has yielded many important insights about how children learn and what constitutes "best practice." Adults have the major responsibility for organizing a learning environment that supports children's growth and learning. Children inform the curriculum and the curriculum is built around their interests and the knowledge they bring with them to the setting.

This approach to curriculum emphasizes the active involvement of both children and adults. Observing, listening, and recording go on as in more "teacher centered" approaches, but the purposes are different. The intentionality of the children plays a major role.

Canadian early educators believe that active, experiential approaches to learning are the best ways for children to be successful. Individuals who are experimenting with negotiated curriculum, the Reggio Emilia model, or other child-sensitive strategies are working in the entire range of early childhood settings. However, there continues to be pressure from some parents, administrators, and provincial officials to continue using teacher-directed approaches that lend themselves to quantitative measurement.

A typical day in a Canadian kindergarten takes place in an environment full of learning centers. Activities include:

- Dramatic play.
- Math manipulatives.
- A science area with a classroom pet, water, sand, and lots of accessories.
- A quiet area for reading books from the classroom library.
- A writing area.
- A listening area with tapes, headphones, and instruments.
- A block area.
- An art area with painting, play dough, clay, "messy" materials.

- A large area for group meetings.

The day is characterized by a consistent routine, with large blocks of time for children to become engaged in activities and a time when everyone gets together, perhaps to sing, listen to a story, share snacks, and talk about the day. Adults plan to interest and challenge the children within each learning center, and the content of each center changes to reflect the seasons, community events, children's interests, and teacher interests. Field trips, classroom visitors, buddies from other classrooms, and opportunities for outdoor play or gym time are other features of a typical kindergarten class.

Training Practitioners

The adult who provides an early childhood environment that facilitates children's learning requires advanced education and supervised experiences with young children prior to beginning his or her professional career.

Sandra Griffin, a past president of the Canadian Child Care Federation, the country's largest organization of childcare professionals, points out that "research identifies caregivers as the single most important factor in the provision of good quality child care services" (1996). Research clearly indicates that teachers with specialized early childhood training are more likely to be responsive to children, interact with them in culturally and developmentally appropriate ways, and establish environments that are both physically and psychologically safe. Those without specific training or access to ongoing professional development tend to be less positive in their interactions with both children and parents.

As in other countries, early childhood education and care tends to attract two distinct groups: young people who have chosen to pursue a career in the field, and mature individuals who frequently have experience in other areas prior to choosing to work with young children. Prospective entrants into formal one-, two-, or four-year programs must have completed secondary school, demonstrate proficiency in written and spoken English, and have

documented volunteer or work experience with young children. In most provinces and territories, a police security clearance is required prior to being placed in practicum settings.

In Canada, postsecondary training for those interested in working with young children varies from province to province. Generally, however, a community college will offer a one-year program leading to a certificate or a two-year diploma program. The focus of study for participants typically includes such areas as child development, communications, program planning and delivery, children's literature, health and nutrition, observation and reporting, working with parents, administration, play, school-age child care, music and movement, cross-cultural issues, and studies of exceptionality. Instructors use a wide variety of approaches to involve students, encourage critical thinking, and help students make links between their practicum experiences and the professional knowledge base. Some universities, such as Ryerson, located in Toronto, offer bachelor's degrees with an emphasis on early childhood education. And some programs ensure that all elementary education students take at least one course in early childhood education as a foundation for teacher preparation.

Family day care is an important aspect of the range of child-care services available to Canadian families. Training and legislative requirements for daycare centers vary across jurisdictions and for family day home providers. Increasingly, these individuals are involved in basic training programs and must document some type of professional development throughout the year. Many municipalities have established family day home agencies, which serve as a central point for recruitment and training of providers and for matching parents with appropriate daycare homes.

In most parts of Canada, the center or home is licensed or approved by the appropriate body, usually a provincial or territorial department of social services or health. The individual educator is certified by their professional body, for example, the Association for Early Childhood Educators, Ontario (AECEO), Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia (ECEBC), or the Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA).

Just as we strive to provide environments that reflect "best practice" in working with young children, so we continue to work toward creating optimal settings in which adults can become excellent early childhood educators. In light of this aim, four goals are suggested:

- To help participants acquire an understanding of early childhood education theory and practice within a framework that is culturally relevant and provides opportunities to become sensitive to a variety of cultures.
- To assist participants with personal, family, and community obligations in ways that allow them to complete training successfully and in a balanced way.
- To increase participants' abilities to communicate with parents, colleagues in other disciplines, and peers so that the best interest of the child is always paramount.
- To assist participants to develop an increased level of self-esteem and confidence in their skills (adapted from McNaughton and Stenton 1992, p. 20).

Ongoing professional development and development of the profession go hand in hand. As Griffin (1996) reminds us: "If we are to have a child care system in Canada that can truly meet the needs of our children and families, that will promote positive developmental outcomes for children and provide support for families, then we must build the infrastructure and the profession to develop and maintain the quality system that we seek."

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EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION
IN NEW ZEALAND

Usually, educators define early childhood as up to age eight. In New Zealand, however, early childhood education usually refers to those years before entry to school, which for most children takes place on their fifth birthday. Although philosophies and practices are similar in the early years of school, this chapter concerns only the preschool years.

Philosophy

Early childhood education in New Zealand is based on the philosophy that learning should be active and social for young children. Thus play is seen as an excellent medium through which learning can take place. Typically, early childhood educators create stimulating environments in which children are encouraged to explore and inquire. These environments provide for physical, emotional, intellectual, creative, and social development. They include outside areas for exploration, with climbing equipment, water, and sand, and inside areas with paint, puzzles, books, clay, dough, blocks, and clothes for dressing up. The role of educators is to facilitate learning within this environment. They do this by observing the children at play, which is considered the work of little children, and assisting them to reach the next level of understanding.

A Short History

Traditionally in New Zealand formal preschool education was provided by the government and early child care was provided by

the family. Mothers typically stayed home and cared for their children. In instances where the mother worked from choice or necessity, children usually were cared for by another family member, a neighbor, or a friend. In the case of the indigenous Maori population, child care was provided by the extended family.

With the urban drift of the 1950s and 1960s and the advent of more mothers returning to or staying in the workforce, the need for quality early childhood education and care outside the family became important. In response to this need, a variety of organizations provided early childhood care and educational services.

Prior to the 1980s, before the government's role in the early childhood curriculum became more focused, what happened to children in programs run by early childhood organizations was largely the responsibility of those particular organizations. The government's role was to maintain the health and safety of children and to address staffing issues.

The "Before Five" government initiative, introduced in 1989, provided national guidelines within which providers of early childhood care and education would operate. The policy included removing tax deductions for early child care and education, bulk grants for salaries and operation, and subsidies for low-income families. This was expected to improve quality by improving the funding. The qualifications for workers, accreditation, training, and management structures and responsibilities were included in the standards.

The following providers are now recognized as offering varying degrees of early childhood care and education.

Kindergartens. Kindergartens are funded by the government and provide programs for children ages 2½ to five years, after which children enter elementary school. Kindergartens usually serve two groups of children per day with up to 40 children attending each session. Younger children usually attend kindergarten for three afternoons a week, and older children attend five mornings a week. Two or three qualified teachers supervise the kindergarten sessions, and parents assist on a volunteer basis. Parents also are significant in fund raising and committee activities.

Playcenters. Playcenters are run by groups of parents who are trained to supervise sessions. The recognized training system provides for the growth of parents as well as children. Playcenters may open for up to 10 sessions a week, and children may attend up to five sessions.

Childcare Centers. There are two types of childcare centers, those that provide full daily care and those that provide care up to four hours per day. Childcare centers may be operated by private owners or community groups. At least one trained staff member must supervise the group in order to meet early childhood regulations. Some childcare centers follow particular education philosophies, for example, Rudolf Steiner and Montessori.

Family Day Care. Family day care provides education for children in homes that have met the early childhood regulations for home care. Support is given to caregivers by a program coordinator.

Te Kohanga Reo. Te Kohanga Reo is a total immersion, Maori-language preschool. The program includes language, culture, and values and is available through a network of Maori early childhood centers. Similar programs are available for the children of Pacific Island parents.

Correspondence and Playgroup Programs. These programs are available for children who are unable to attend other early childhood services, usually because they live in rural areas. Playgroups vary depending on the needs of the children, and the correspondence program supports parents to promote their children's learning.

Curriculum and Instruction

The New Zealand Curriculum Framework sets out eight essential skills that underpin all curriculum documents from early to tertiary education. Those skills are: communication skills, numeracy skills, information skills, problem-solving skills, self-management skills, physical skills, work skills, and study skills. The framework is designed to ensure that the environment is planned to support learning, education and care are linked, the

overall development of children is stressed, instruction is based on what children already know, skills are not taught formally or in isolation, and children's progress is assessed and evaluated continually.

Training Practitioners

Most providers of early childhood education and care are licensed under the New Zealand Education (Early Childhood) Regulations, 1990. These regulations set the minimum standards for early childhood services. In order to be licensed, an early childhood education center must have premises that comply with the regulation of the local council authority, the fire service, and the health protection office. Centers also must have a supervisor who holds a recognized qualification in early childhood education. At least one staff member must hold a current first-aid certificate. Other requirements are that the centers provide an outline of their education program, state the aims and purposes of their institution, and write policies on child management and prevention of child abuse.

In order to receive government funding, early childhood centers must be licensed and must obtain Ministry of Education approval of a charter, which sets out the centers' objectives and practices. Charters typically cover such issues as curriculum; relationships with the community, parents, and families; equity issues, including the provision of programs for children with special needs; and staffing.

Kindergarten teachers are the most highly qualified of all providers of early childhood education and care. A three-year diploma of teaching and a four-year bachelor of education provide in-depth early childhood training, which gives a theoretical base and ensures practical skills.

Courses of study cover the social, physical, and intellectual development of children, as well as education, curriculum, and management issues. Guided practice is an integral part of each course. Students in training spend part of each semester working in preschool settings under the supervision of qualified staff.

A key feature of both kindergarten training courses and training run by the Playcenter Association is observation. Future early childhood educators are trained to observe children formally and informally in a variety of situations. It is from the analysis of these observations that programs are planned and children's learning is fostered. Such analysis provides a record of each child's development over time.

Early childhood education is regarded as a way to promote excellence in education. There are three major factors that contribute toward successful early childhood programs:

- A carefully planned, well-paced early education program gives children the experiences they need for their cognitive, physical, emotional, and social development, especially when the program has an environment where children are encouraged to explore.
- Teachers in such programs need to be competent observers of children's educational needs and capable of tailoring a curriculum to particular children.
- The vast majority of successful programs and teachers view an early childhood curriculum as an integrated whole, rather than made up of independent subjects or skills.

The training program provides students with opportunities to acquire a broader understanding of varying traditions of learning and highlights the integration of theory, observation, reflection, and practice. It emphasizes a holistic approach to child care and establishing high-quality service in the varied settings of early childhood.

CONCLUSION

The United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and New Zealand recognize and value the importance of early care and education for young children. This is apparent in the philosophies of these four nations. They all base their early care programs on some fundamental principles of child growth and development, and all of them use age-appropriate and individually appropriate instructional practices. In addition, each country assumes that teachers should be knowledgeable in the areas of child growth and development in order to meet the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual needs of the child. All of the nations value the use of play as a way of learning for young children.

The history of child care in the United States is strongly related to the needs of working parents. The federal government established free daycare programs for the children of working mothers during World War II. After the war, however, the centers were phased out. The federal government also became involved in early care of young children by enacting laws to provide for children with special needs. Significant influences on early care came from the works of such educators as John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Elizabeth Peabody, Patty Smith Hill, and Harriet Johnson.

In the United Kingdom some notable influences on the history of early care reflect the contributions of the MacMillan sisters and their concerns regarding the child's physical health, as well as intellectual development. Robert Owen significantly influenced child care by his concern for poor children and the development of the infant school. Other influences came from Susan Isaacs and William Van Der Eyken.

Early care programs in Canada began with the establishment of a Public Nursery, which later became a home for orphaned girls. As the number of working mothers increased, daycare centers became more numerous. Educators who influenced the movement in Canada included William Blatz, Mary Wright, and Margaret Fletcher.

In New Zealand the history of early care is strongly tied to the government. Formal preschool education was provided by the government. For those children unable to attend the formal preschools, early care was provided by the extended family, mothers, or neighbors.

In the United States significant changes and reforms were brought about by the National Association of Education for Young Children (NAEYC). This organization identified core values for early care and developed a code of ethical conduct and statement of commitment for professional practice. The NAEYC also developed guidelines for the preparation of early childhood teachers. This instigated national voluntary accreditation of early care programs. Most of the 50 states now require some form of licensing and certification of programs and people who work in the programs. Other important changes include an emphasis on developmentally appropriate methods of teaching, the importance of play as a learning activity, and extensive parental involvement. The government also furthered reforms by providing legislation to meet the needs of diverse populations.

In the United Kingdom an important change is the concept of parent power. Parents are more involved in the programs and have more control over schools and education. Other significant changes include laws to provide for equality in all early care programs. There is an emphasis on reaching the whole child. Attention is given to the physical, as well as academic, areas of development.

In Canada recent changes and reforms are related to the diverse population. Specific training is provided to professionals to deal with these cultural differences. Another important change is related to the use of technology to deliver training and distance

learning. Partnerships have been created with the government and communities working together for the benefit of the children.

In New Zealand the "Before Five" government initiative provided national guidelines for early childhood care and education. A number of organizations were recognized as providers for these services. Government-funded kindergartens were established. Play centers, childcare centers, family day care, and Te Kohanga Reo language preschools now provide early childhood education programs.

Curriculum and instruction are similar in all four nations. All include general and advanced programs in early childhood preparation. Goals of meeting the needs of the children, understanding the theories, and knowledge of child growth and development are included in the curriculum. The importance of play as a learning activity is stressed.

The training of practitioners in the different countries is very similar. Degree programs require knowledge of theory and practical experience in daycare programs and schools. The Child Development certificate in the United States is similar to the two-year National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) certification in the United Kingdom.

Some important differences in the four nations include the following: in the United Kingdom there is an emphasis on meeting the child's health needs. There is a major emphasis on parent power in the early care programs in the United Kingdom and Canada. Prospective childcare practitioners' backgrounds must be checked to ensure they have no criminal records in the United Kingdom and Canada. In Canada practitioners must demonstrate mastery of writing and speaking English to work with young children in one-, two-, and four-year programs.

Early care in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and New Zealand appear to have more commonalities than differences. All the nations value the importance of early care programs. There is an emphasis on training and credentialing of teachers in the programs in an effort to promote successful early care for the nation's children. All the nations seem to recognize

the necessity of early care for the future achievement of young children.

Eisner (1997, p. 349) stated it best when he observed that we have two special goals of education for our children: "We want our children to be well informed — that is, to understand ideas that are important, useful, beautiful, and powerful. And we also want them to have the appetite and ability to think analytically and critically, to be able to speculate and imagine, to see connections among ideas, and to be able to use what they know to enhance their own lives and to contribute to their culture."

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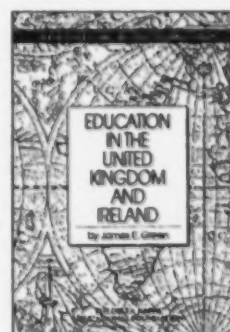
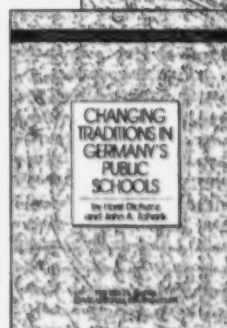
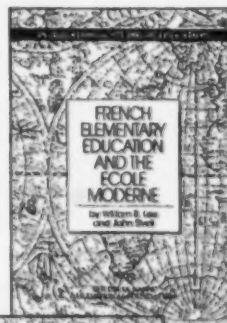
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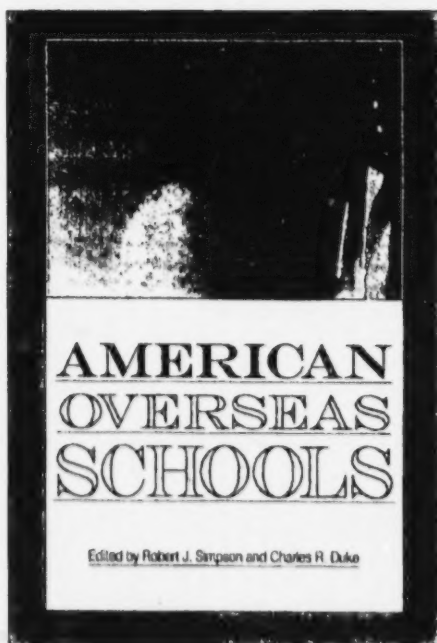
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*edited by Robert J. Simpson and
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Practitioners in international education have long felt that some text should focus on the similarities and differences in working in an "American" school in an overseas location versus working in a public or private school "back in the States." Numerous educators have said that their experiences in overseas schools were never addressed by any books on educational administration. This book attempts to remedy that problem.

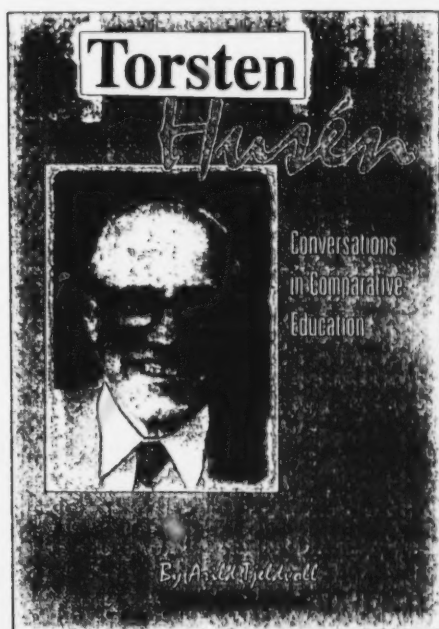
Two major types of American overseas schools exist: "dependent" schools operated as part of the Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DoDDS) and "independent" schools, which include those aided by the U.S. Department of State Office of Overseas Schools, multinational companies, expatriate communities, and those operated for profit by private entrepreneurs. Other "American" schools abroad have a sectarian purpose and get support from U.S. religious groups. The independent schools overseas often are more truly international and multicultural, usually drawing students from several countries. DoDDS units tend to be more like stateside urban or suburban schools transplanted into a U.S. military environment in a foreign country, although students and staff in such schools invariably gain positive cultural benefits from the overseas location.

With various veteran educators editing and contributing to each chapter and drawing from the experiences of dozens of colleagues in all types of schools, writing styles vary throughout this book, from the strongly didactic to the less structured, anecdotal approach. Each chapter, indeed, might readily stand alone, a characteristic of most anthologies; but few authors have written about staff, programs, students, or management without touching on all sorts of topics. This is a good thing. International schools should be viewed from many perspectives by many experts.

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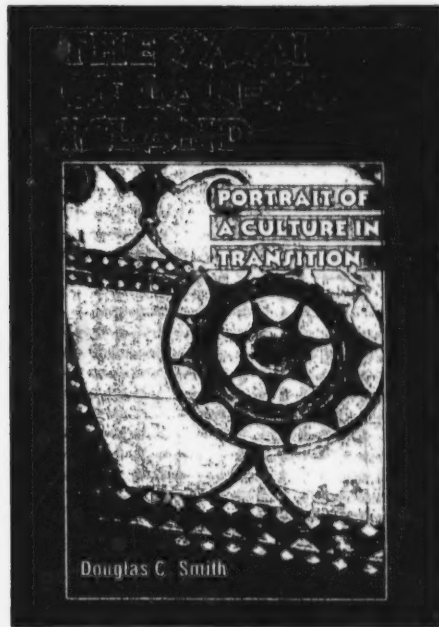
Through his cross-national studies and experiences, Husén learned to look at education using a multifaceted historical and cultural lens as a necessary condition for change. Not only does he explain how international and comparative education came together in the beginning, but he also describes the role and the reason for the inception of many education agencies, both national and international in scope.

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The Yami of Lan-yu Island

Douglas C. Smith

Once, not really so long ago, living on a self-contained island could ensure to a people a certain continuity of native culture, a certain "purity." Such was once the case for the Yami of Lan-yu Island, a small group of Asian aborigines whose homeland lies about 60 miles southeast of Taiwan.

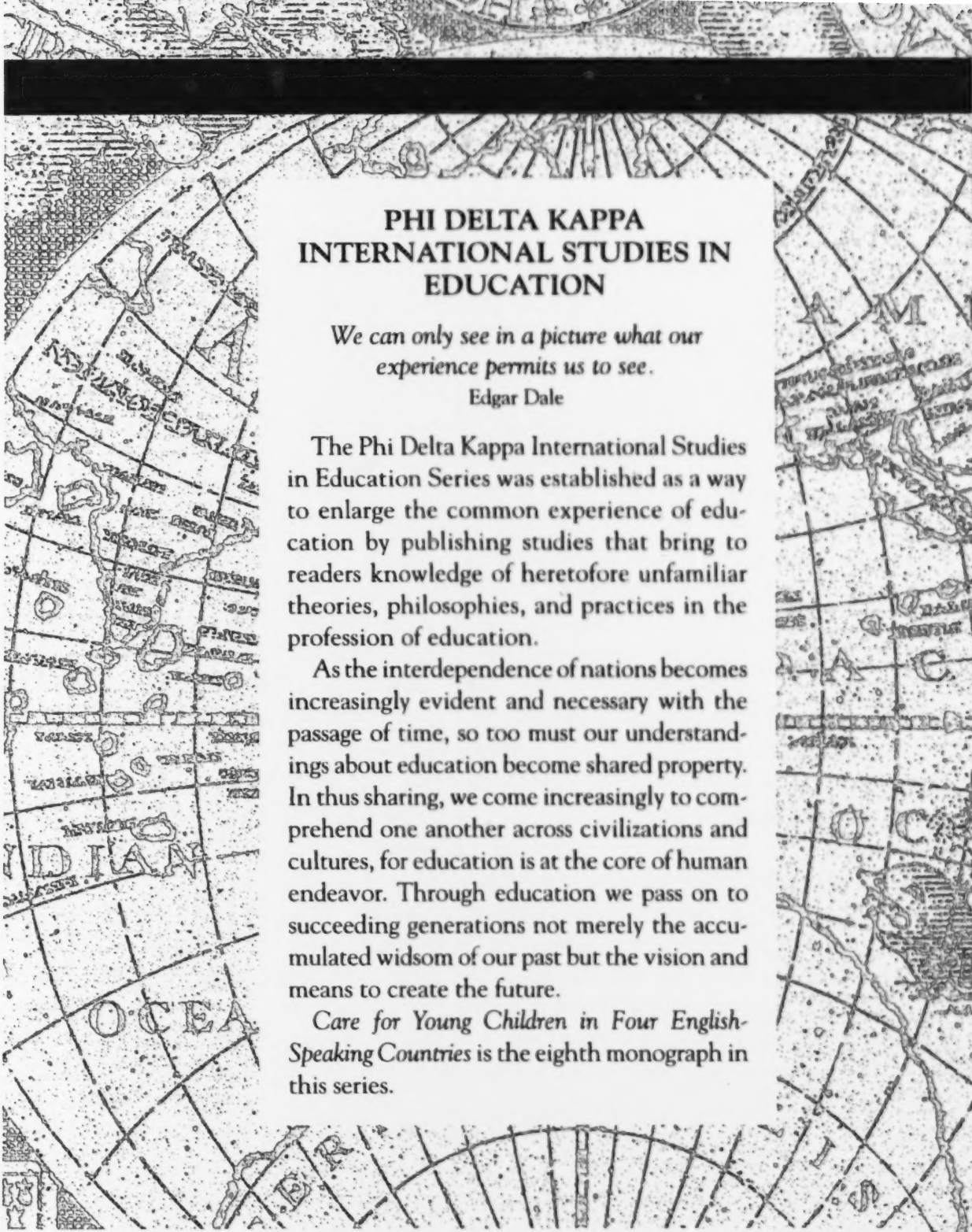
But modern times have destroyed this idyll along with the Yami's isolation and self-sufficiency. And so the Yami culture is now rapidly changing. No longer strictly aboriginal, the Yami are making "progress," according to the standards of the developed world.

This study is intended as an introduction. Douglas Smith, well-known for his writings on Asian cultures, draws a portrait of a people in transition. In so doing, he also raises questions about what that transition might mean in the context of how Western educators, in particular, address cultural issues.

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